

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for transmitting packets of information, comprising:
  - a multiport switch connected to a plurality of subnets through ports of the multiport switch, each of the plurality of subnets being associated with a subnet Internet Protocol (IP) address, the multiport switch further including a configuration table storing associations between the subnet IP addresses and the ports of the multiport switch;
  - a host processor connected locally to the multiport switch; and
  - a remote processor communicating with the multiport switch through the host processor using an IP address assigned to the multiport switch, the remote processor instructing the host processor to modify the configuration table in the multiport switch.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein the host processor communicates with the remote processor through a TCP/IP stack.
3. The system of claim 1, further including:
  - a router coupled to at least one port of the multiport switch.
4. The system of claim 3, wherein the router is coupled to a second plurality of subnets, the second plurality of subnets connecting to the multiport switch through the router.
5. The system of claim 4, wherein the remote processor is located in one of the second plurality of subnets.
6. The system of claim 1, wherein the multiport switch is a layer 3 switch.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the host processor is configured to transmit status information relating to the multiport switch to the remote processor.

8. A method of processing packets in a network device, comprising:  
receiving a packet at one of a plurality of receive ports in the network device, the packet including address information that indicates at least a destination subnet for the packet;

5 identifying, via a configuration table, one or more output ports in the network device for the packet based on the address information;

forwarding the packet to the destination subnet via the identified one or more output ports; and

10 updating the configuration table based on information received from a remote processor, the remote processor transmitting the information to the configuration table using an IP address uniquely assigned to the network device.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the remote processor communicates with the network device through a host processor connected to the network device.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the host processor executes a TCP/IP stack.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein the host processor transmits status information relating to the network device to the remote processor.

12. The method of claim 8, wherein the network device is a layer 3 switch.

means for receiving the packets from the network, each of the packets having information that includes at least destination information that indicates an intended

a configuration table storing associations between Internet Protocol (IP) addresses of subnets and output ports of the multiport switch, the configuration table being updated based on information received from a remote processor;

14. The network device of claim 13, further including:

15. The network device of claim 14, wherein the host processor communicates with the remote processor through a TCP/IP stack.

16. The network device of claim 14, wherein the host processor transmits status information relating to the network device to the remote processor.

17. The network device of claim 13, wherein the network device is assigned a unique IP address.

18. The network device of claim 13, wherein the network device is a layer 3 switch.

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